

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** Urban Design Committee

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Wednesday, July 5, 2006, 3:00 p.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

**MEMBERS AND OTHERS  
IN ATTENDANCE:**

Members: JoAnne Kissel, Gordon Scholz, Scott Sullivan and Mary Anne Wells. (Mike Eckert, Thomas Saddler and Kim Todd absent.)

Others: Ken Hake (Security Federal); Larry Roots (Artist); Mark Hansen (Thunderstone); Ernie Castillo and Jeff Cole (Urban Development); Ed Zimmer, David Gaspers and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.

**STATED PURPOSE  
OF MEETING:** Regular Urban Design Committee Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

### Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Kissel moved to elect Gordon Scholz as Chair of the Urban Design Committee and Mike Eckert as Vice-Chair, each for a one-year term; seconded by Sullivan. Motion carried 4-0. Kissel, Scholz, Sullivan and Wells voting 'yes'; Eckert, Saddler and Todd absent.

### Approval of meeting notes of June 7, 2006

A motion was made to approve the June 7, 2006 minutes. Motion carried 4-0. Kissel, Scholz, Sullivan and Wells voting 'yes'; Eckert, Saddler and Todd absent.

### Public art project: 12<sup>th</sup> Street Skywalk (Jeff Cole)

Jeff Cole distributed a timeline of events for the public art project as well as written communication from Dennis Scheer describing the purpose of the project and his support for Roots' proposal. A copy of each of these documents has been submitted to the record. Cole explained that there were 41 art submittals for the project in October of 2005, and 21 were forwarded to the Selection Committee. He also described the review and approval process and the steps taken since the last Urban Design Committee meeting.

Roots stated that the Committee's discussion reflects the diverse thinking of the community. It is a difficult project for an artist to carry out his own city. He was inspired by Mary Pipher's book *The Middle of Everywhere* and by discussions with Lincoln Action Program about refugees settling in Lincoln—the New Americans who are now part of this community.

Roots explained that the size of the figures will stress their importance. The muted brick backdrop will let the colors of the figures stand stronger. Abstract public art can leave a lot of people wondering what it's about. The photography is more accessible. There was a desire to transform the whole structure and have the ability to see out but not in. This piece will also maintain the structure's integrity.

Kissel believes that it is a brilliant approach. It meets and exceeds the criteria for what the project should do and makes the whole skywalk a work of art.

Wells expressed two concerns with the safety inside the walkway and the effect on traffic. Cole stated that Chief Casady has no concerns with the safety or security of the project. Hake also noted that the skywalks close at 10:00 p.m.

Sullivan stated that this is an art issue versus the built environment. He is concerned that the visual is not going to be as dramatic as shown in the mock-up. One of the nice things is that this is an economical approach. Sullivan asked if the colors will fade over time. Roots replied that 3M has done testing on trucks over 10 years, and they have determined that there is almost no discernible difference in the degradation. Hake stated that there will be a written proposal from the installer regarding the warranty and removal of the piece. Their intent is to restore the skywalk to its original condition.

Scholz stated that his main concern still lies with the brick background imagery. However, he likes the diversity of the piece. Another concern is that there is a rise in the skywalk and asked that will be dealt with. Roots stated that the coursing will run on an even level. They would like to keep the brick relatively level. There is also some distortion to play with as well.

Roots stated that he wanted the brick wall to show the markings and wear of time. He felt that the figures should blend into the background and not be highly contrasted.

Sullivan commented that there have been many people involved in the project, and it has gone through a structured process. This gives him a good comfort level.

Scholz asked if release forms have been obtained from the people represented in the piece. Roots stated that release forms have been obtained from all the people with a couple exceptions to date. However, release forms will be obtained on everyone in the piece. Additionally, background checks will be done on everyone.

Written comments were also received from Mike Eckert expressing his concerns with the scale, proportion and lack of transparency of the project. A copy has been submitted to the record.

Sullivan recommended acceptance of the project in terms of the appropriateness of design and materials, seconded by Kissel. Motion carried 4-0. Kissel, Scholz, Sullivan and Wells voting 'yes'; Eckert, Saddler and Todd absent.

**Thunderstone building, West O redevelopment project (Ernie Castillo, Urban Development Dept.)**

Castillo stated that last year the City Council approved both a blight study and redevelopment plan for the West O corridor between 9<sup>th</sup> Street and SW 63<sup>rd</sup> Street from P Street and south of West O Street.

Thunderstone is the first redevelopment agreement among the thirteen that have been identified in the Plan. This plan was unanimously approved by the City Council approximately five weeks ago. The City is contributing \$245,000 of tax increment financing (TIF) funds for public improvements. It is a \$3 million plus project.

Hansen stated that he began his business in 1993 and currently has 35 employees. He presented a site plan and rendering of the building. They want to clad the entire finished area of the building with their product, which they have been in production for several months. The rest of the building is steel panels with a small granite aggregate glued to them. From a distance, it will look like granite panels and cut limestone. They have not developed a landscape plan yet, but they will work with a landscape architect to do that. Castillo stated that they will come back to this committee with the landscape plan. Hansen noted that construction will not be completed until February of 2007. A building permit was obtained, and footings are in the ground.

Scholz asked if any of the TIF money goes to the building itself. Castillo responded that it does not. It will be applied to the public sewer and water systems, street access, and landscaping.

Zimmer commented that these projects should normally come to this Committee earlier in the process. He also noted that landscape could focus views to the building.

No formal action is required, but the landscape plan will be brought to the Committee, possibly in August.

**Misc.**

There was no discussion under this item.

The meeting concluded at 4:29 p.m.

*\*\*Please note that these minutes will not be formally approved until the next meeting of the Urban Design Committee. \*\**